

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011

DRAFTED BY IO/SCT:LNCAVANAUGH

APPROVED BY IO/SCT:LNCAVANAUGH

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R 182320Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA 5786

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FOL REPEAT NEW DELHI 2133 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 11

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 2133

FOLLOWING TEL BOMBAY 0341 DTD 10 FEB 76 RCVD NEW DELHI
BEING REPEATED TO YOU. QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOMBAY 0341

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: TGEN, PFOR, US, IN

SUBJ: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVITY FROM TARAPUR POWER STATION

REF: NEW DELHI 1951

1. BELIEVE CONGEN NOW ABLE TO CLARIFY CONFUSION ARISING FROM
SHAH'S AVOIDANCE, IN DEALING WITH CURRENT UPROAR ON TARAPUR'S
SAFETY, OF REITERATING SETHNA'S STRAIGHTFORWARDED ASSURANCE OF
SECURTY TEAM THAT IAEC HAD RESOLVED PROBLEM OF FUEL ELEMENT
LEAKS. CONGEN CONVINCED THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN SUBSTANCE
BETWEEN THEIR POSITIONS; THEY ARE TALKING IN DIFFERENT TIME FRAMES,
TO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES AND ARE REALLY ADDRESSING DIFFERENT PROBLEMS.

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SETHNA WAS REFERRING TO THE 1973-74 PROBLEM THAT HAD LED TO BREAKUP

OF BUNDLES OF FUEL RODS AND CAUSED VERY DIFFICULT REPAIR PROBLEMS. THIS DIFFICULTY HAS BEEN RESOLVED FOR OVER A YEAR AND FUEL ELEMENTS IN SECOND LOT ARE OPERATING WELL WITHIN SAFETY LIMITS.

2. WHEN REDENT CRITICISM OF TARAPUR SURFACES, CONGEN NOTED TO BOTH GE AND SHAH THAT AT LEAST ONE COULD SAY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT "THERE IS NO LONGER ANY PROBLEM WITH FUEL ELEMENTS". BOTH QUICKLY SAID THIS APPROACH COULD NOT BE USED IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT WITHOUT PROVOKING CONTROVERSY WHICH COULD DIVERT ATTENTION FROM FACT THAT BOTH GE AND IAEC CONSIDER TARAPUR "SAFE". FROM TIME-TO-TIME THERE ARE MINOR PROBLEMS WITH FUEL ELEMENTS AND REPAIRS HAVE TO BE MADE. HOWEVER, BOTH IAEC AND GE NOW SAY THAT LEAKS ARE NO LONGER A MAJOR PROBLEM AND ARE ALTOGETHER QUITE MANAGEABLE AND WELL WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS. THEY ALSO MAINTAIN THAT FUEL ELEMENTS NOW USED AT TARAPUR ARE COMPARABLE IN QUALITY TO THOSE USED ELSEWHERE. LOCAL GE REPRESENTATIVE SENDS FULL REPORT ON RADIOACTIVITY LEVELS AT TARAPUR ONCE A WEEK TO GE AT SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA FOR CONTINUOUS MONITORING AND THERE HAS BEEN NO CRITICISM AS READINGS WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS.

3. SHAH HAS CONFIRMED IN CABLE TO GE THAT HE IS NOT TAKING A "NO PROBLEM" APPROACH TO CURRENT CRITICISM. INSTEAD, HE IS STANDING ON LINE REPORTED BOMBAY 0289, SENT TO DEPARTMENT AS DELHI 1777, THAT (A) SAFETY AND HEALTH HAZARDS ARE MONITORED ON DAILY BASIS AT TARAPUR AND (B) THEY ARE MANAGEABLE, WELL WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS.

4. IN SAME CABLE SHAH POINTS OUT THAT IAEC NOT CERTAIN WHETHER OR WHEN DR. BECK OF UAC (MENTIONED IN SENATE HEARINGS) VISITED TARAPUR, ALTHOUGH IAEC HAS RECORD OF BACK VISIT TO BOMBAY. IAEC NOT AWARE OF ANY VISIT BY DR. HANOVER OF USAEC TO TARAPUR.

5. IN SAME CABLE TO GE, SHAH ALSO SAID THAT IAEC HAD TO EXPRESS ITS RESERVATION TO GE AND BECHTEL STATEMENTS THAT THERE WERE NO DESIGN DEFICIENCIES AT TARAPUR.

6. GE REPS HAVE REGRETTED THAT THEY HAD LED CONGEN TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BELIEVE SOME GE FUEL ELEMENTS STILL IN USE AT TARAPUR (REPORTED BOMBAY'S 0305 SENT WASHINGTON AS DELHI'S 1897). CHECK OF THEIR RECORDS REVEAL ALL FULL ELEMENTS NOW IN USE THERE HAVE BEEN FABRICATED AT IAEC'S HYDERABAD NFC FACILITY. COURTNEY

UNQUOTE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PHYSICAL SECURITY, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, NUCLEAR FUELS, RADIOACTIVE WASTES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE039218
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LNCAVANAUGH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760062-0607
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760237/aaaabgop.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NEW DELHI 1951
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <30 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVITY FROM TARAPUR POWER STATION
TAGS: TGEN, PFOR, US, IN
To: IAEA VIENNA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006